



Keeping Our Heroes Safe

Minnesota Veterans Homes and COVID-19

September 2020 edition



Policy and Procedures

The Veterans Healthcare leadership team follows guidance provided by the Governor's Office, Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

- All MN SVH follow applicable Minnesota Governor's Executive Orders.
- MN SVH develop and revise policies and procedures as needed to implement best practices including:
 - Addressing staff exposure and ability to work
 - Adopting masking and personal protective equipment (PPE) processes
 - Screening all staff every time they arrive to work
 - Checking all Residents for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily
 - Developing visitation guidelines



Facility Access and Social Distancing

To decrease the number of people on our Home campuses and to monitor people entering the homes, we have implemented a number of measures:

- Each Home has one designated entrance; staff use their ID badge to enter the building.
- Visitation is based on community and facility exposures to COVID.
- Staff are telecommuting if their positions allow.
- Staff are using virtual meeting apps like Skype.
- No large in-person meetings are scheduled.
- Staff maintain 6 feet distance as their work allows.
- Additional break areas have been created to provide physical distancing during staff mealtime.





Visitor Restrictions

Since the start of the pandemic, the Homes have restricted visitors to decrease the risk of spreading the virus. In July 2020, several alternative visit options were introduced.

Please contact your care team for details and to schedule:

- **Window Visits:** Window visits are coordinated at all MN Veterans Homes.
- **Outdoor Visits:** Outdoor visits are scheduled and coordinated at all MN Veterans Homes.
- **End of Life/Compassion Visit:** Visitors are allowed during end-of-life circumstances; this is coordinated by the care team.
- **Essential Caregiver Visits:** Criteria and processes are being developed for Essential Caregiver visits.
- **Visitation:** Based on facility and community exposure to COVID-19. Each home is individual on when they are able to do these and how they will occur.
- **Vendors** are screened and must be identified as “essential” to continue their work in the facility.
 - If possible, contractors and vendors are not allowed in the Resident care areas.

Attention Visitors:

STOP!

HELP US KEEP OUR RESIDENTS SAFE!

To protect our Residents, entry to this building is restricted **ONLY** to necessary visitors:

- Employees
- Immediate family of those Residents at end of life
- Government officials or other necessary support

If you believe a visit is necessary, please contact your care team.

On entry, allowed visitors will be screened, apply hand sanitizer and wear a mask. Anyone with respiratory symptoms and/or a fever, who has traveled within the last 14 days to impacted areas, or had possible exposure to COVID-19 is not allowed in the building.

Please continue to connect with your loved ones through video chat, phone, text and email. Confirm that we have your contact information so that we can keep you informed.

Thank you for keeping our Residents' safety a priority.

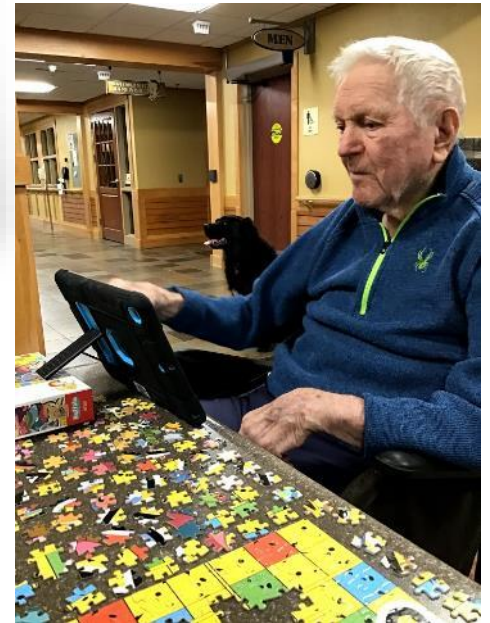
The logo for Minnesota Veterans Homes, featuring a circular seal with a map of Minnesota and an eagle, surrounded by the text "MINNESOTA VETERANS HOMES" and stars.

Please address questions or concerns to the Minnesota Veterans Home Administrator.

Rev A 03/20



- Our volunteer programs have been on hold during the pandemic.
- While they can't be at our Homes, volunteers have supported us through donations of cloth and surgical masks and hand sanitizer.
- They have also sent letters and messages to our staff and Residents.
- They have also used our iPads for visits with some Residents.





Employee Screening



All staff are screened when they arrive for their shift.

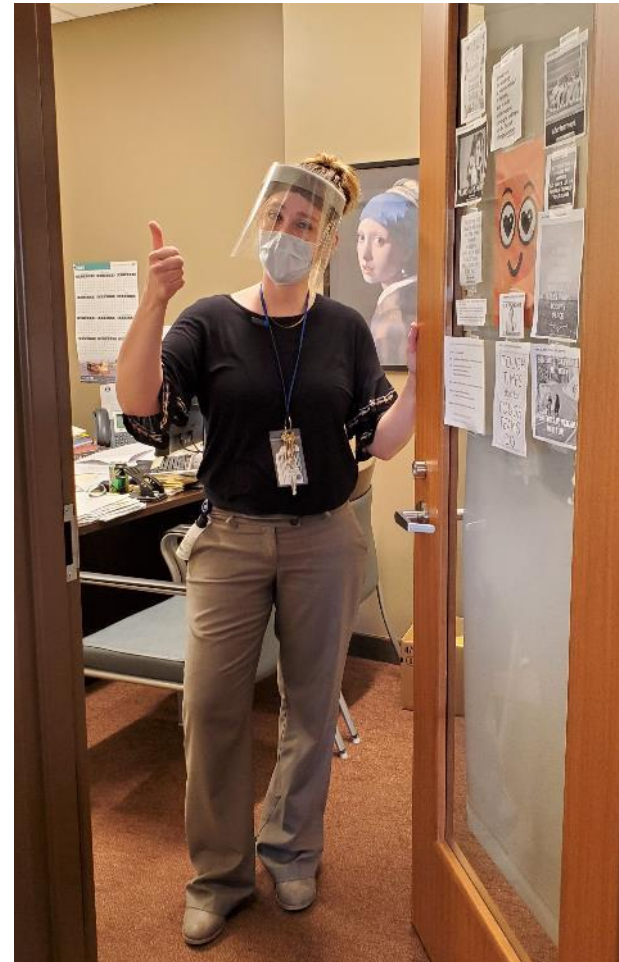
- The screening includes:
 - Temperature check
 - Screening questions related to symptoms, travel and exposure to anyone with COVID-19.
- If staff respond “yes” to any question or have a temperature greater than 100 F, they complete a “level 2” screening with a nurse.
- No staff should be in the building if they are not well. We have a policy for staff who are not able to go to work and when they are allowed to return to work.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Veterans Homes are following MDH and CDC recommendations for best practices for Personal Protective Equipment.

- All staff are wearing surgical masks.
- All staff who come in contact with Residents are wearing a face shield or goggles, in addition to their surgical masks.
- Staff are encouraged to follow community best practices for wearing masks to and from work.
- At this time, all Homes have an adequate supply of PPE; however, we are taking measures to conserve when possible.
- Leadership and Administration are managing PPE inventory and have developed a process to share PPE across Homes to meet immediate needs.





Environment

All Homes are following CDC cleaning requirements including increasing frequency during the day.

Other measures include:

- Minneapolis Home General Store is closed.
- Coffee service following infection prevention protocols.
- Plexiglass installed in some areas, as needed.
- Floors marked at 6-foot distances.
- One-way traffic in some hallways.

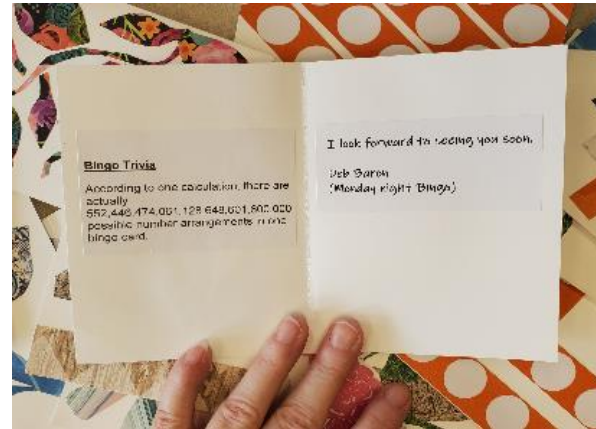




Residents

The care of our Residents never waivers.

- Residents are screened for a high temperature, symptoms of COVID-19 and changes in oxygen saturation daily, or more often if indicated.
- Encouraged to stay on their units and wear a mask if they go to common areas.
- Dining that ensures 6-foot distance between others.
- Providing telehealth appointments, as available.
- Individualized activities or activities that ensure 6-foot distance from others.





Maintaining Contact



Both isolation and loneliness are of great concern during visitor restrictions. Residents at our Homes continue to have contact with staff who care for them as well as connecting with loved ones, if possible.

Social connectedness is increased by:

- Special monitoring and attention from staff regarding a Resident's mood and behavior.
- Activities take place on the units and 1:1 between staff and Resident.
- iPads are available for Residents to connect with family and friends.
- Calls from the Resident's care team to families have increased.
- Facilitating various types of contacts and visits both virtually and through windows and outdoors.





Infection Prevention Practices & COVID-19 Units

When a Resident is suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19, we are decreasing the risk of spreading the virus to other Residents.

- Residents with symptoms are placed on droplet precautions following MDH and CDC infection prevention guidelines until tested for COVID-19.
- Residents with a positive test result are moved to a designated COVID-19 area within the facility.
- Staff assigned to the COVID-19 unit do not work in other areas of the facility.
- Testing may occur more than once for Residents.
- Governor Walz supports increased testing of Residents in all congregate living settings for older adults.





Admissions

All MN State Veterans Homes are accepting admissions.

We support a person-centered approach for orientation to the facility and ensure good communication with families

- All new admissions are admitted to the Isolation unit for 14 days as a precaution in a specific and separated area of the home
- Staff will use extra barriers when caring for new Residents
- Monitoring of symptoms and potential need for COVID-19 testing prior to transition to home unit/room



Caregiver Support

Caregiver and family support is a priority. This includes current Veterans and families as well as those who are on the waiting list pending admission in the near future.

MDVA is supporting caregivers by:

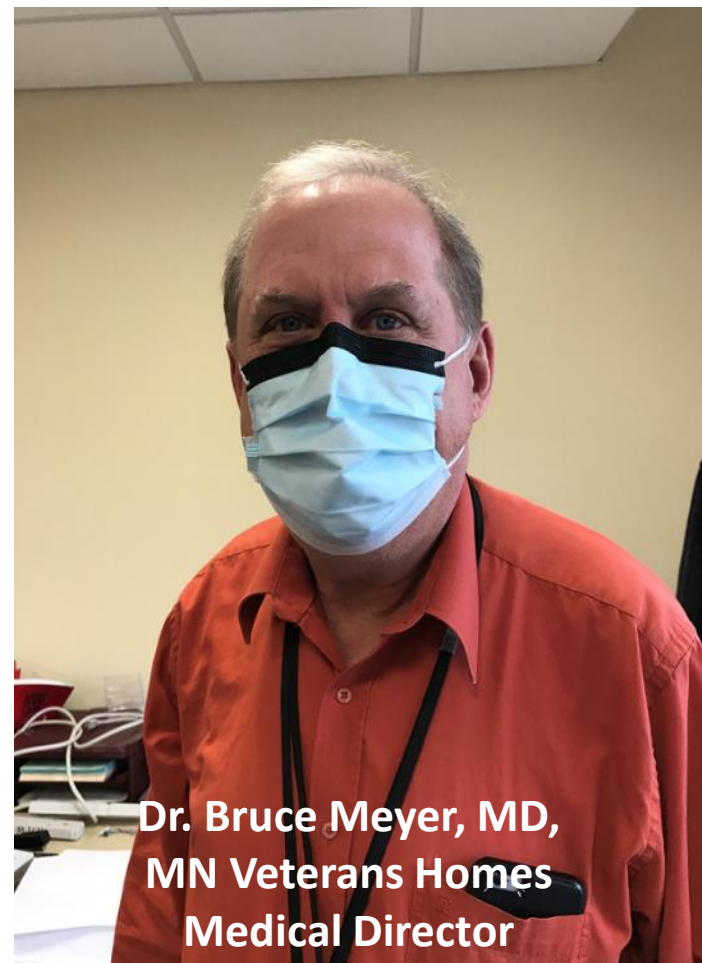
- Providing daily updates via a Minnesota Veterans Homes COVID-19 Information Line; call 651-757-1599 or 1-833-454-0147.
- Posting information and updates on the MDVA website at www.minnesotaveteran.org
 - [Caregiver Support webpage](#) with information sheets on topics such as access to food, physical activity, stress management and links to community resources.
- Partnering with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) and [Veterans Linkage Line](#) for caregiver outreach and referrals.
- Adding training for staff related to social isolation and providing support using best practices.



Medical Services

Medical providers are both on site and using telehealth to administer care to our Residents. During the pandemic, we have implemented:

- Telehealth services with both Federal VA and community providers.
- Hospice Services that allow us to continue to partner in creative ways at end of life.
- Dental Services that remain available for emergency dental concerns and will soon include preventive dental care



Education and Resources

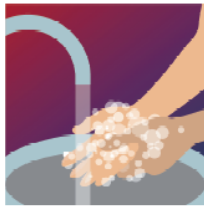
There are many resources available for you to find education and information on COVID-19. MDVA uses these sites as sources for credible and up to date information.

- The MN Department of Health (MDH)
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
<https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/resource-center/COVID-19-Resources>

The following education materials are from the [MN Department of Health website](#).

Mask Up MN! How to Wear Your Mask

How to Safely Wear Your Mask



Step 1: Wash or sanitize your hands.



Step 2: Make sure the top of the mask is over your nose and the bottom is under your chin.



Step 3: Place the mask over your nose and mouth before you use the ear straps or tie it behind your head.



Step 4: Move the mask around so it covers nose, mouth, and chin completely.



Step 5: The tops of some masks can bend. Press your fingers on the top of the mask to make them fit tight around your nose.



Step 6: Do not touch the mask while wearing it. Use the mask ear straps or ties if you need to make it fit better.



Step 7: Use the mask ear straps or ties to take it off. Do not touch the front.



Step 8: Throw away if mask is disposable.



Step 9: Wash your mask by machine or by hand before you use it again.



Step 10: Wash or sanitize your hands again.

mn MINNESOTA

STAY SAFE MN

Minnesota Department of Health | health.mn.gov | 651-201-5000 | Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format. | 07/15/2020


How to Wash Your Hands



Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

STAY SAFE MN


Prevent the Spread of COVID-19



Wash your hands




Get tested when sick



Stay 6 feet from others



Wear a mask




Stay home when able



Work from home when able

WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS



Fever



Cough



Shortness of breath



Chills




Headache



Muscle pain



Sore throat



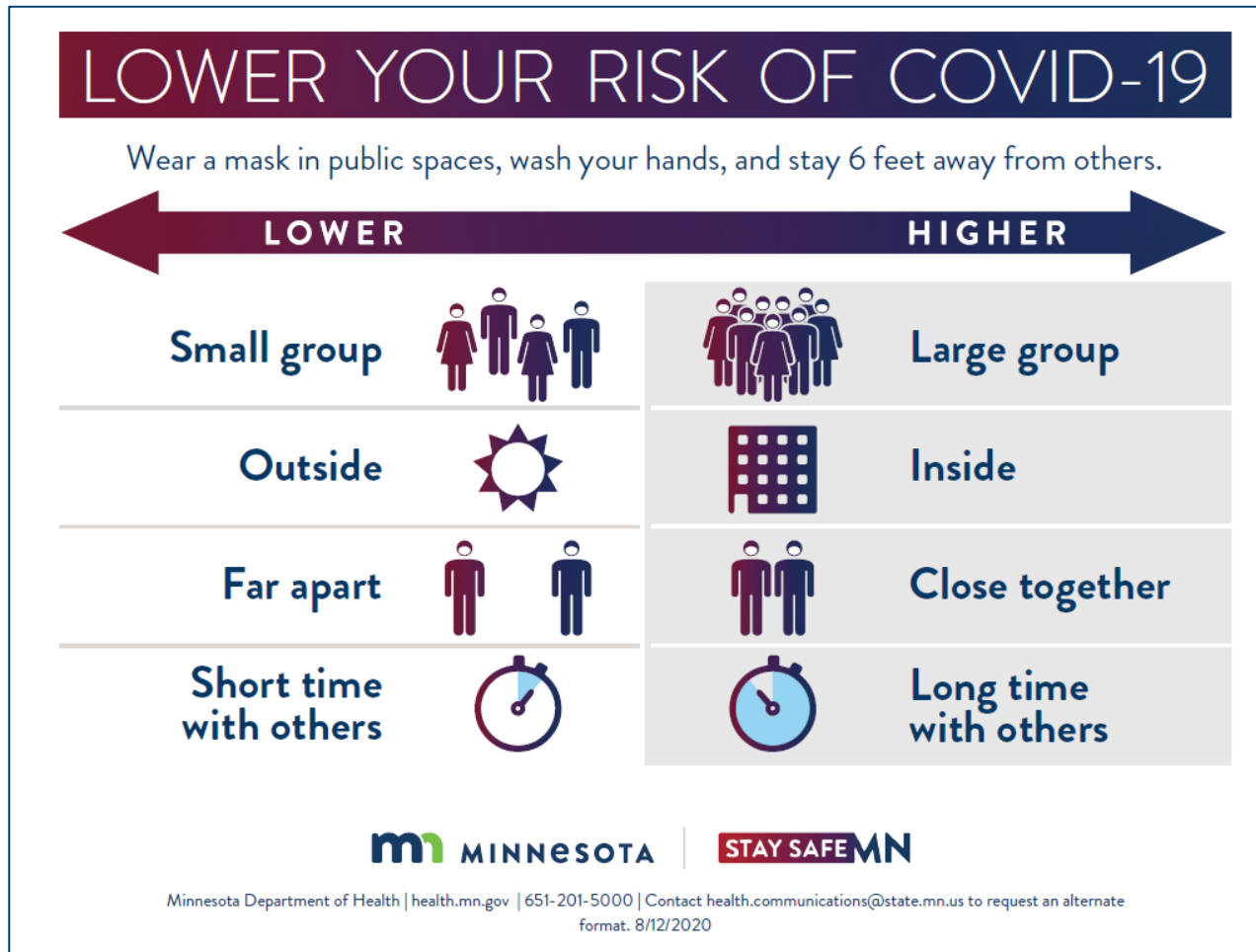
Loss of taste or smell

For more information, visit health.mn.gov
HOTLINE: 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

mn MINNESOTA

Minnesota Department of Health
Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.
06/10/2020

Lower Your Risk of COVID-19



Contingency Standards of Care

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH								
STAY SAFE MN								
Contingency Standards of Care for COVID-19								
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS*								
What to wear if you are a:	Surgical Mask	N95 Respirator	Cloth Mask	Eye Protection	Gown	Gloves	Hand Hygiene	Comments
Resident negative for COVID-19			X				X	Wear mask when out of room or within 6 feet of other residents or HCP, if able.
Resident positive or suspected of having COVID-19	X						X	Stay in room as much as possible. Wear mask if need to leave room or when within 6 feet of others, if possible. If shortages, surgical masks should be prioritized for HCP and then for residents with COVID-19 (as supply allows).
HCP with face-to-face contact with COVID negative residents	X			X			X	Plus Standard Precautions and any other posted Transmission-based Precautions. Implement "extended use" universal surgical mask and eye protection.
HCP with face-to-face contact with COVID positive residents	X	For AGP and ICU		X	X	X	X	Plus Standard Precautions and any other posted Transmission-based Precautions. Implement "extended use" universal surgical mask and eye protection.
Non-HCP with no face-to-face contact with residents: kitchen, EVS, office staff	X						X	Plus Standard Precautions. Surgical masks are preferred for all staff. If shortages, surgical masks should be prioritized for staff with face-to-face resident contact; others should use cloth source-control mask. Cloth source-control masks acceptable for non-HCP not within 6 feet of any resident or coworker for >15 minutes, cumulative, per shift.
Non-HCP with periodic face-to-face contact with residents: kitchen, EVS, office staff	X			X			X	Plus Standard Precautions. If entering resident care area, don surgical mask and eye protection for that period of time.
Visitors to non-COVID-19 resident	If supplies allow		If surgical mask not available				X	
Visitors to COVID-19 resident	X			X	X	X	X	



Team Work

Resident and staff safety are our priority!

Staff are working as a team to provide the best and safest care!

"As Deputy Commissioner, I am proud of the way our more than 1,250 staff are working to keep both Residents and staff safe. Though we have all been working hard to do the right things, this is not the time to let down our guard against this deadly virus. Keep up the good work and hopefully things will soon begin to return to as before. THANK YOU ALL!"

~ Deputy Commissioner - Healthcare Douglas Hughes